

A

S E R M O N

DELIVERED MAY 6, 1849, IN THE

NORTH DUTCH CHURCH, ALBANY,

ON

OCCASION OF THE LAMENTED DEATH

OF THE

REV. WILLIAM J. POHLMAN,

LATE MISSIONARY TO CHINA;

AND WITH SOME MODIFICATION,

ON JUNE 10TH, IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK,

AS THE

ANNUAL MISSIONARY DISCOURSE

BEFORE THE

GENERAL SYNOD OF THE REFORMED
DUTCH CHURCH.

BY DUNCAN KENNEDY, D. D.,

MINISTER OF THE SAID CHURCH.

ALBANY:
PRINTED BY JOEL MUNSELL,
1849.

SEERMON

DELIVERED AT A MEETING IN THE

NORTH DUTCH CHURCH, ALBANY,

OCCASION OF THE LATEST DEATH

REV. WILLIAM J. BOHLMAN,

LATE MISSIONARY TO CHINA,

ON THE MORNING OF THE 10TH OF SEPTEMBER,

AT THE MISSIONARY MEETING,

HELD AT THE CHURCH OF THE

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH,

BY DUNCAN KENNEDY, D. D.,

ALBANY,
PUBLISHED BY JOHN MURPHY,
1852.

CORRESPONDENCE.

DR. KENNEDY:

Dear Sir—The undersigned members of your Consistory, in conformity with their own wishes and the generally expressed desire of your congregation, request a copy of your Sermon on the death of Rev. William J. Pohlman,—our late Missionary to China,—for publication.

With sentiments of cordial esteem,

We are, sincerely yours,

WILLIAM BAY,
GERRIT L. WINNE,
D. F. HOLDRIDGE,
JACOB LANSING.

Albany, May 24th, 1849.

GENTLEMEN.

If this imperfect tribute to the memory of our departed brother, shall have the effect to administer consolation to a large circle of bereaved relatives and friends, or quicken the missionary spirit in the church of which he was a member, my principal object in consenting to its publication will be answered.

I am, Gentlemen,
affectionately yours,

D. KENNEDY.

Albany, May 25th, 1849.

TO WILLIAM BAY, GERRIT L. WINNE, }
DAVID F. HOLDRIDGE, JACOB LANSING. }

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Sir—The undersigned, President of the Company, in conformity with their own wishes and the existing agreement dated 1st June 1871, request a copy of your statement of the results of the work done by the Company during the year ending 31st March 1872.

Yours faithfully,

Wm. H. H. H. H.

WILLIAM H. H. H.

GEORGE E. W. W.

D. E. H. H. H.

WILLIAM H. H. H.

Wm. H. H. H.

It is requested that the statement be forwarded to the undersigned, who will be glad to receive it. The statement should be in the form of a report, and should contain a full and complete statement of the work done by the Company during the year ending 31st March 1872. The statement should be signed by the President of the Company, and should be accompanied by a copy of the existing agreement dated 1st June 1871.

Yours faithfully,

Wm. H. H. H.

D. E. H. H. H.

Wm. H. H. H.

To William H. H. H. H.

James F. H. H. H.

SERMON.

MARK VI., 15.

Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

Although we are assembled this evening, according to custom,* in concert with myriads of the people of God, to speak of the things that belong to his kingdom, still we all feel that there is something connected with this occasion of a special character. We are met, not only in obedience to the promptings of the Christian spirit, to pray for the prosperity of Zion, but also in obedience to the voice of Divine Providence, to give expression to the feelings of our hearts in view of an event which has filled us with sorrow. We come to this place, not, we trust, with repining spirits or murmuring words, but in acts of worship to pledge submission to the

* The discourse was preached on the evening of the Monthly Concert.

divine will, and by communion with the word and Spirit of God, to gather strength to sustain us under his chastisements, and to nerve us to greater zeal and devotedness in his service.

It would be doing violence to the feelings of us all, were I to speak lightly of the deep sorrow that has filled our hearts in consequence of the recent intelligence from a distant land, that our beloved brother and friend and missionary has ceased from his labors on earth. The blow has fallen heavily upon many, and we do well to indulge emotions of sadness.

But I am aware that, while it is a privilege to mourn with temperate grief for the dead, and to tender to each other the expression of our Christian sympathy, it is, at the same time, a much higher privilege to seek that the affliction may be sanctified to us, and that by means of it we may become more deeply and permanently interested in that cause to which our departed brother gave his best energies, and in an earnest devotion to which he laid down his life. I am persuaded that if it were possible to take counsel of his departed spirit at this moment, he would bid me speak to this people, not so much of himself as of the cause he loved; not so much of his own labors and sacrifices, as of the neces-

sities of the perishing heathen; not so much of the appeals of the missionary, as of the claims that address us from the condescension, the love, the cross of Him who is the Lord of missions. I bring before you then, that subject which I know he would most delight to urge upon your attention, and I feel that I am thus, in a manner, his representative, while I invite you to consider,

The duty of sending the gospel to the heathen;

*The agencies by which this is to be accomplished;
and,*

The encouragements to engage in the work.

I. *The duty of sending the gospel to the heathen.*

1. In deciding the question of obligation in regard to this point, to what higher or clearer authority can we refer, than that of the text:—"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Can any thing be more explicit than this? And surely no one will presume to say that this charge was intended to be limited to the disciples; for the promise connected with the injunction, "Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," forbids its limitation to those whose period of service was to extend through only a few brief years. The obligation and the promise are

mutually coextensive. The duty then is as binding upon the church at the present day, as it was eighteen centuries ago. Every person who, at this moment, professes to be a disciple of Christ, is under as weighty obligations to labor according to his ability for the dissemination of the gospel, as was Peter, or John, or Paul. No one is left to speculate on this point. His duty is defined for him. The law has been proclaimed, and every believer is bound by his oath of allegiance to obey it. Necessity is laid upon him; and he may as well question his obligation to live a life of honesty, of prayer, of faith, as to doubt his responsibility in regard to this.

2. The same conclusion is reached also from a view of the moral and spiritual elements that compose the Christian character. The believer is fitted, by the grace of God, for the very work to which he is called by positive enactment. He is made an enemy to sin, and a friend to holiness; and this leads him to desire the universal extermination of the former, and the universal triumph of the latter. He is characterized by love to God and love to man. His love to God must impel him to seek whatever will contribute most to the divine glory; and

his love to man must dispose him to seek man's highest good here and hereafter. And in no way can this principle of holy love find a development commensurate with its boundless yearnings, but in the universal extension of the gospel of Christ. This, of necessity, constitutes every Christian a true missionary. He possesses also the spirit of obedience; and must therefore act in view of the unchangeable ordinance—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Every Christian is a man of self denial; he is not therefore at liberty to consult his comfort in regard to any duty to which he is clearly called. Such, then, are some of the elements that compose the Christian character; and they prove not only his fitness to engage in the holy work of missions, but that this is in part, at least, the design of his "high calling."

And what is thus found to distinguish the individual believer, must be found to distinguish the church also. The church is therefore a missionary body; a spiritual organization, qualified by grace and commissioned by divine command, to engage in the work of evangelizing the world. And as she is the "body of Christ,

the fulness of him that filleth all in all," she possesses the spirit of Christ, and is thus pre-eminently fitted to become a channel of grace to the perishing nations. God has made her the depository of amazing resources in the copious and powerful influences of the Spirit which she is permitted to wield by faith and prayer; and He will hold her responsible for the use she makes of her solemn trust. She is commanded to employ them for the extension of his kingdom; and disobedience is rebellion.

3. Our duty to the heathen may be deduced from the brightest examples. What is the history of the primitive church, but the history of her missionary operations? The record speaks of the entire body of the followers of Christ, consecrated to the work of spreading the knowledge of the gospel. It is a history of zeal which no discouragement could cool; of activity which no suffering could abate; of self denial which neither bonds, nor imprisonments, nor tortures, nor death, could exhaust or subdue. They were *missionaries*; they were *all* missionaries. But they were neither more nor less than we are bound to be.

We have a higher and more perfect example still in the beneficence of Jesus Christ. He

came from Heaven to preach the gospel to the ignorant and perishing. For us He “became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich.” He submitted to toil and persecution and anguish, to save a dying world. And in reference to the benevolent spirit which He cherished and exhibited, his own language to each of us is, “follow thou me.” And in regard to the same element of character, we hear the Apostle saying, “If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

4. The very privileges we enjoy define our duty to the heathen. We have what they have not; that of which they are in perishing need, and which we can communicate with infinite benefit to them and no loss to ourselves. Is it not then the very first dictate of humanity as well as religion, that, as we have freely received, we should freely give? Are we at liberty to contemplate the wretched condition of these millions upon millions, with cold indifference? To admit such a supposition were a perversion of every principle of the gospel—a libel upon every element of Christian character. We are bound to send them the gospel, and our voluntary neglect to do what we can to enlighten and sanctify and save them, is at the peril of God’s displea-

sure. "Go ye, then, into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

Thus much may suffice to illustrate our obligation to this duty. We proceed,

II. *To notice some of the more prominent agencies by which it is to be discharged.*

God administers the affairs of his government in this world by the use of means. This is a fundamental principle which obtains in both the natural and moral world. In each the divine purposes are accomplished through the agency of second causes. To secure a harvest, the ground must be opened, the seed must be planted, the sun must shine, and the genial showers must descend. Here is a union of human and divine agency, and each is essential to the contemplated result. And by the union and coöperation of precisely the same agencies, is the spiritual harvest of the world to be obtained and gathered in. God is able, it is true, to accomplish all his purposes of grace, independently of human instrumentality; yet He has determined to employ it. Such is the order of things which He has established. And so intimately are the human and divine agencies united in the work of the world's salvation, that the former is as indispensable in its place as the latter.

1. Among the agencies to be employed by man, I notice, in the first place, *prayer*. This is at once a direct recognition, on the part of the church, that the success of all its efforts is dependent upon God. This puts honour upon the divine agency, as it is an appropriate acknowledgment of the truth, that without the divine Spirit, we *can do nothing*. And this truth it is eminently important we should all deeply feel. Had we the most ample of human resources at command, could we expend energies the most exalted that finite minds can possess; could we send forth missionaries as zealous as Paul, as intrepid as Peter, as eloquent as Apollos, all would be in vain, without the concurring influence of God's Holy Spirit. Of this truth prayer is an appropriate recognition. It inscribes on the fore-front of all our exertions, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord."

Yet prayer, as an agency to be employed by us, is indispensable. God has made it so. He has declared that "He will be inquired of" to accomplish even that which He has promised and which He purposes to do. It is an agency of unlimited power, for as all hearts are in the hands of God, and He has promised in answer

to the prayers of his people to “turn them as the rivers of water are turned;” what more potent agency can we possibly wield! There is power in prayer, in comparison with which everything else is weakness. It is a power which the feeblest can wield with unlimited efficiency, by which “one can chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight.” There is an *Omnipotence* in prayer; for it reaches to the highest source of all power,—“it moves the arm that moves the world.” Poor a man may be in earthly possessions, but if rich in the grace of prayer, there is an inexhaustible treasury of influence at his command. He may not be able to go or to send to the heathen, so far as person or money is concerned, but he may do both in the expenditure of prayer. Gold and silver he may have none, but he can lay at the foot of the cross the rich stores of his desires and affections. And while Paul is planting and Apollos is watering far hence among the gentiles, he can be efficiently aiding them both by bringing down the increase. What more honorable position, then, can a man occupy, than when bowed in supplication for the conversion of the world? This is investing the creature with a glorious, I had almost said, a fearful importance. This

is raising up the regenerated soul to the sublime eminence of coöperation with God himself, and causing him to know that the responsibility of the world's conversion rests upon him. And shall we not seek to appreciate this responsibility, and labor earnestly to meet it? And as our imperfect prayers constitute an agency of such immeasurable power in the accomplishment of the work assigned us, shall we not adopt the resolution of the Psalmist:—"For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake will I not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth."

I have noticed the instrumentality of prayer *first*, because engaging, as it does, the power of God, it stands highest on the catalogue of agencies. But,

2. There is another means to be employed of no less importance in its place,—I mean *pecuniary contribution*. Indeed the exercise of prayer fully implies corresponding exertions. He who offers the petition, "Thy kingdom come," and does nothing more, acts with the same gross inconsistency as he who prays "Give us this day our daily bread," and then surrenders himself to stupid inactivity and indolent repose.

And as the latter can not reasonably expect that his prayer will be heard, neither can the former. "Let not such a man think that he shall obtain anything of the Lord." Prominent then among the personal demonstrations that are to accompany our prayers and which are to prove them sincere is, as already said, *pecuniary contribution*.

The obligation to consecrate our substance to this work is imperative upon all who believe the gospel. He who would guiltlessly throw off this obligation, must be able to prove to a demonstration either, that it is not the divine purpose that the religion of the cross should become universal, or, that it is not the divine purpose to give it universality through the agency of human effort. I say, one or the other of these propositions he must establish beyond the possibility of a doubt. But this he can not do. He can not make the slightest approximation to such a conclusion, because the very contrary is everywhere incontestibly asserted, equally in the books of Nature, of Providence, and Revelation. He may, after all, decline to give; but the obligation remains unimpaired, and his final account will be in accordance with the measure of responsibility involved.

We are taught that our relation to God, so far

as earthly possessions are concerned, is that of stewards, possessing nothing in virtue of any inherent right or absolute claim. We are his agents, and as such are to dispose of the substance committed to us in trust, in a way which we have just reason to suppose will meet his approbation. Nor are we, as stewards of God, here left altogether without divine direction. It is true, there is no specific rule by which has been defined the precise amount which each individual is to expend in this work. But there are general directions in the word, and numerous indications in the providence of God, by which every honest mind can, in all ordinary cases, satisfactorily settle the question of duty. "Thou shalt honour me with thy substance." How can this command be more fully obeyed either in the letter or in the spirit, than when seeking, with the means that God has given us, to spread his glory, as the God of salvation, throughout the world?

"Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God, which he hath given thee." Here the appeal is made to every man's conscience. The rule which is to regulate our benefactions is the same by which God himself is governed in the bestowment of his gifts upon

us. He would have us give from higher and nobler principles than those involved in the narrow calculations of human policy. He measures the extent of our obligations by the standard of his own enlarged benevolence. And what has He done for us? Has He given us an abundance of this world's goods? Has He watched over us, preserved us, surrounded us with innumerable comforts of a personal, social and domestic character, and for us caused the outgoings of the morning and the evening to rejoice? Has He bestowed upon us the inestimable gifts of civil and spiritual freedom, where conscience is unshackled, and the immortal mind is left to obey the promptings of the Divine Spirit that condescends to hold communion with it? Has He bestowed upon us the richer blessings of the gospel, and made us acquainted with the "knowledge of the glory of God as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ? And at what price do you value all these blessings? You say, and say truly, that they are beyond all price. Believe me, according to this estimate, you are to give unto the Lord. You are to give as you are able, "according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee." This is the rule of your conduct. And were you to be governed

by it, and were the whole church to be governed by it, there would be no lack of means for sending the gospel to the ends of the earth.

But the principle of *gratitude* calls upon us to consecrate our substance to the glory of Christ in the extension of his kingdom. "He who was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich." Oh ! what a powerful appeal is involved in this declaration ! Why that terrific scene on the summit of Calvary ? Why yonder pale and expiring victim ? What mean those throes of more than mortal anguish ? Why that humiliation and agony, those tears and groans and blood of "God manifest in the flesh ?" My brethren, you know the meaning and the cause of all. You have been taught its amazing, its overwhelming import. And I only ask, as you stand by the cross, gazing in unutterable emotion upon that which is the source and centre of all your joys and your hopes, "*How much owest thou to my Lord ?*" Is it too much to expect that you will at once respond, "We are not our own, and we will glorify him in our bodies and our spirits, in our time and talents and possessions, which are all his." Well may a vision of the cross put every selfish thought to flight, and

impel us, in adoring gratitude, to lay ourselves and all that we possess, at the feet of our Divine Creditor. Oh! if we had a just impression of the cross, our inquiry would never be, on our way to the altar of oblation, "*How little may I give?*" but "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?" We should instinctively say, "How poor, how inadequate are my richest offerings!"

Give then, my brethren, as God has given you. If you have an abundance of this world's goods, give abundantly. If you have but little, give a portion of that little. Give according to your ability, and be it much or little, God will accept it. If it be but the "widow's mite," or even "a cup of cold water," give it because God requires it; give it because it is Christ-like to do so. The poorest are not debarred the privilege of thus contributing to the glory of Christ. He who in his poverty brought only the offering of a badger's skin to the building of the tabernacle, was as acceptable to God, as he who from his affluence presented the gold, and the silver and the onyx stones. The widow's mite was regarded as a munificent offering, because it was "all her living."

The *spiritual condition* of the heathen world

seconds, in deep and solemn tones, the appeals that come to us from the cross. Turn your eye for a moment upon the empire of Paganism. You behold its teeming millions perishing for lack of knowledge which you possess in rich abundance. You see them famishing for the bread of life, of which you have enough and to spare. And does not the compassion of the Son of God towards us, demand a reciprocal expression of our sympathy and benevolence towards them? You can not now bring to him in person, as in the days of his flesh, your offerings of gold and frankincense and myrrh; you can not evince your attachment to him by opening your alabaster box of precious ointment and pouring it upon his head. But, oh! you can do more; you can sympathize in his purposes of grace toward a perishing world; you can listen to the appeal of human hopelessness and sorrow, as it rises from every heart and from every habitation in heathen lands, and hastening to the spiritual rescue of the nations, you may secure to yourself at the last day, the sublime expression of personal acknowledgment, "*Inasmuch as ye have done it unto these—ye have done it unto me.*"

3. The last agency, to which I shall refer, by

which we are to engage in the work of evangelizing the world, is *personal* consecration. By personal consecration, I mean that abiding sense of individual responsibility that will lead every professing Christian to feel, with an unchanging and practical conviction, that it is *his* duty to bear a part in executing the great commission of the text,—to *preach the gospel to every creature*; that he is bound either *to go or to send* to heathen lands; to *preach*, or *cause to be preached*, the unsearchable riches of Christ to those immense masses of our fallen humanity. I mean that union of zeal and devotion to the cause of Christ that will beget a cheerful self-denial, a resolute and decided action, a spirit of lofty enterprise and sublime heroism that will shrink from no obstacles, that will gird itself to meet all difficulties, determined in the strength of God, that come what may, the gospel of his Son shall be proclaimed throughout the world. I mean that believing spirit which takes the word of God for just what it means,—which cherishes its convictions of truth with all the life and freshness of a personal view of the scene of the crucifixion,—which believes and yearns and sympathises as if actually beholding the gloomy procession of six hundred millions of souls to a

hopeless perdition, and as if hearing an audible voice from the world of doom "Send to our brethren, lest they also come to this place of torment." I mean that spirit of unwavering confidence in the promise of God, that though trials and disappointments abide the faithful laborer in the cause, victory will at length crown the soldier of the cross, and ultimate and universal triumph grace the chariot of salvation.

These are the elements that constitute personal consecration, and which in their union and concentration make every man, in the true sense, a missionary, causing him to preach the gospel to every creature as his business,—his high calling; and which will lead him,—whether at home or abroad, in life or in death, to glorify God in the salvation of the world.

And did this spirit more thoroughly pervade the church, there would be no need of constant appeals for means to send, and for men to be sent, to heathen lands. Oh! did it exist in this church,—did it animate the bosoms of the young men who are here associated, the name of Pohlman would not as heretofore, have been the only one on our records to which we could point as *our* missionary to the heathen; and we should not be, as we this day are, without a

single representative on heathen soil. Young men of this church! is there not one among you who will arise to take the place of our departed brother,—to carry on the work which he commenced, and if need be, to fall as he fell, and gloriously share with him the martyr's crown! His example, his prayers, his sainted spirit call upon you to go and preach the everlasting gospel. If you will hear the appeal, go, and though we love you, we will part with you cheerfully. Go, and we will follow you with our sympathies and our prayers. Go, and our hearts will be with you amid your toils and your sorrows; and should you fall as Pohlman fell, we will weep over you, but we will not murmur; we will bow in submission at the cross, and as you enter upon your reward on high, we will thank God on your behalf, and join you in shouting salvation to the Lamb!

III. But I direct your attention, in the last place, to the encouragements to engage in the work to which we are called.

1. We take encouragement, first, from the fact that it is preëminently the work of God. God is the God of missions. It is a work which he himself commenced, which he has hitherto conducted, and which he will carry on to a

glorious consummation. "Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." This stamps the cause with the impress of divinity. Were it an enterprise of human origin, though from the benevolence and grandeur of its design, it might well engage our sympathies and efforts; yet from the magnitude of the proposed achievement, we would of necessity despair of success. The enterprise is one to which Omnipotence alone is adequate. And it is the knowledge that to its accomplishment Omnipotence is actually pledged, which begets unwavering confidence as to the result. It can not fail. God's providence and word and spirit are the mighty agencies with which we are permitted to co-operate, and therefore we know that our labor will not be in vain in the Lord.

2. We draw encouragement, in the second place, from the fitness of the gospel to meet the wants of those to whom we are called to send it. I know that the gospel, as the great instrumentality by which the race is to be elevated, and the moral disorders of the world are to be remedied, is regarded by certain classes of men with indifference, if not with contempt. Much has, in all ages, been ascribed to the potent influence of philosophy. And many vague the-

ories are, in our own day, proposed as substitutes for Christianity in regenerating and improving the human character. But instead of attempting to prove the inherent inadequacy of any system that is not divine, to achieve the object proposed, we would simply ask, what in this respect, has any or have all human devices ever accomplished? We have heard and known of the good done among different nations of the earth by the gospel of the Son of God; but of the triumphs of philosophy in elevating the barbarian, in refining the savage, in purifying the idolater, we are as yet utterly ignorant. Grant to philosophy more power than it really possesses,—the power of imparting moral illumination, still it could not furnish deliverance from the evils it would thus make known. It could only terrify by the dangers revealed; it could not calm by any adequate remedy provided. It would serve only like the lightning in the midnight storm, to reveal by its sudden glare the frightful precipice to the verge of which the wanderer had been beguiled, while it could point to no secure retreat from the violence of the sweeping tornado.

The triumphs of philosophy! Where are they? What heathen soul has she ever puri-

fied and moulded into the image of Christ? What funeral pile has she ever extinguished? What blood-stained car has she ever arrested in its terrific course? What idol has she ever dashed from its pedestal? What mosque or pagoda has she ever converted into a Christian temple? What human bosom has she ever inspired with the anticipations of heaven, or what eye enkindled with the hopes of immortality? Philosophy! she has no sympathies with man's spiritual wants and woes. She herself needs the baptism of the Holy Ghost. She has never labored for man's highest interests. She can point to no sacrifices made to reclaim him from his moral alienation from God. She has expended no energy, endured no trials, on his behalf in heathen lands. No monument is found to mark the memory of her martyrs, and she has never received the benediction of a single soul whom she has prepared for glory.

I admit she has endured trials, and suffered hardships, but all for ends inferior to the redemption and salvation of the soul. Be it so that she can point to her numerous victims, yet she can not point to one whose great purpose it was, under her control, to make known to sin-

ful, degraded, dying men, the way of pardon and eternal life. Her highest achievements are temporary in their duration, and totally inadequate to the wants of immortal and accountable natures. All of religion she has ever taught is contained in the inscription upon the only altar she has ever reared—"TO THE UNKNOWN GOD."

Need I say that all the demands of fallen humanity, are met and answered in the gospel of the Son of God,—that gospel which we have received commands from on high, to proclaim to the ends of the earth? It has abundant provisions to meet every exigency of man's condition in this life, and prepares him for glory and honour and immortality in the life that is to come. It is just such a religion as he needs, and is destined, in its very nature, to become universal.

3. But as another source of encouragement, we have the divine promise that this gospel shall be diffused throughout all nations of the world. "From the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the gentiles." "He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." "The kingdoms

of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." "The whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge and glory of the Lord." This is but a mere specimen of the innumerable great and precious promises with which the Bible teems in regard to the future triumphs of the gospel in this world. And what heart does not bound with exultation in view of the encouragement it presents? What is the scene which, through this medium of divine promise, we are permitted to contemplate in the future? It points to a time when the gospel of the Son of God shall have passed beyond the limits within which its hallowed influence has been for centuries confined; when all the virtues and graces which it inspires shall be found to elevate and adorn universal humanity; when impurity, and profaneness, and idolatry, and oppression, shall be found only on the melancholy records of the past, and devotion, and love, and righteousness, and peace, shall stand out in human character, and be the crowning glories of the world. Under the progressive illumination of the sun of Righteousness, China with her countless millions will soon learn the principles of an elevating and purifying Christianity. The inhabitants of India will be enlight-

ened by a radiance brighter than that which streams from her countless funeral piles, and will be cleansed from her pollution by waters purer than those of the Ganges. The deluded children of Persia shall abandon their degrading vassalage to the impostor of Mecca. The barbarous sons of Africa will emerge from the dense gloom which has for ages gathered upon them, and in that valley and shadow of death yet to be illuminated with the lustre of immortality, they shall appear in all the dignity and glory of regenerated nature. Paganism shall disappear, its temples shall be destroyed, its idols shall be "cast to the moles and to the bats," and all the earth shall become vocal with the praises of the living God.

Such is the import of the divine promise. Shall we not believe it? Shall we not be animated by it in the work to which we are called? All this, and more than we can anticipate, shall be in due time accomplished. "Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?"

Even now is the gladdening promise in process of fulfilment. Our eyes have seen and our ears have heard of the amazing revolutions the gospel is producing. On every quarter of the

globe, there are central points now occupied that are sending forth in all directions streams of purifying and elevating influence. In every accessible region of both hemispheres are found the ambassadors of the cross, and the pleasure of the Lord is prospering in their hands.

In Greenland and Lapland, where the heart was cold and lifeless as their stormy and ice-bound coasts, has the gospel imparted its heavenly warmth, its life-giving influence. In Southern Africa, the degraded Hottentot and the Bushman have begun to experience the power of Christian love, and to cherish the joy of the Christian hope. In Western and Central Asia do you find the man of God, and as he stands at the foot of ancient Lebanon, or ascends the Hill of Zion, or unfurls the banner of the cross on the mountains of Caucasus, or in the plains of Shinar, or in the cities of Persia, grace and salvation are found to be the encouragement and the fruit of his labors. And when we remember that the idols of the Pantheon fell from their places before the onward sweep of the gospel, and that neither the power of imperial Rome, nor the wild beasts of the Colliseum, nor the fierceness of the Goths, could withstand its progress, can we imagine that any sterner opposi-

tion is yet to appear? Need we doubt what will be the fate of the "feather gods" of the Pacific, or the "mud idols" of India, or the wooden images of China?

3. Are we not, in the third place, permitted to draw encouragement and hope from the aspect of the times in which we live? But a few years since, a very large portion of the world was inaccessible to the messages of salvation. The missionary who had the hardihood to enter into Egypt, Arabia, Persia or Burmah, was almost certain to make his life the forfeit of his temerity. But now every barrier is removed, and the whole world is open to the reception of the gospel.

And in addition to this, a new spirit seems to have been infused into the nations of the earth. We live at a period characterized by mental and moral revolution. Ancient systems are crumbling to the dust; the human mind is struggling to cast off its shackles. The slumber of ages is being disturbed, and the overpowering conviction seems to be taking possession of the human mind, that it must rise to a loftier destiny than it has yet attained. It is every where combining its energies for elevated action, and is engaged, on a scale of noble daring and sublime

effort for spiritual freedom hitherto unknown. There is not only change, but change for the better. There is not only movement, but movement in advance. The councils of cabinets, the diplomacy of statesmen, the upheaving of thrones, the tramp of armies and the conflict of powers, are all in the line of progressive improvement and all indicate a brighter day for the benighted nations. And while the God of providence is thus "shaking terribly the earth," is it not a prophetic intimation that the "desire of all nations" is at hand? While he is breaking sceptre after sceptre, and removing diadem after diadem, is it not to show that he is near "whose right it is to reign," and is thus preparing the world for his gracious and universal supremacy?

Why, then, when the fields are thus whitening for the harvest,—why should any man's heart fail him through fear? Who shall withhold effort now? Who shall restrain prayer now? Who shall slumber at a period like this? Who shall continue inactive, when the call is so audible and unequivocal, that we come up to the "help of the Lord against the mighty?" Let us take heed to the significance of the declaration, "If thou altogether holdest thy peace *at this*

time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise from another place, but *thou* shalt be destroyed."

4. We are encouraged to engage in this work from a view of the salutary influence which it exerts upon the interests of religion in our own land. I know it is sometimes said that in our zeal for foreign missions, we are doing injustice to the domestic field. But this I am persuaded is an unsound position. Duty and interest are always in perfect harmony. We can not therefore render cordial obedience to the injunction—"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," without the experience of a rich recompense of reward at home. No church can act out the missionary spirit without enjoying a blessed reflex influence in direct proportion to its consecration to the cause. "Give and it shall be given to you." "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." There is therefore, no surer way of inflicting moral injury upon ourselves than by refusing to do good to others; nor is there any surer way of doing good to ourselves, than by doing good to others. "He that watereth others, shall be watered himself." I can not doubt that foreign and domestic mis-

sions have been and are destined to be, mutually auxiliary to each other; nay, I deem it not too much to say, that if there were not, at this day, a foreign missionary organization, neither would there be a domestic missionary organization. We can not then give up the foreign field. We can not afford to loose its powerful influence upon our own land. The spirit of piety forbids it; the true interests of our church and our country forbid it.

But after all the sources of encouragement we have thus noticed, it is nevertheless true that in the prosecution of this great work we are ever liable to temporary disappointments. These, when the faith of the church is weak, are fitted to beget unwarrantable despondency. But, in the nature of the case, such events must be expected, and they should not surprise us. And when they do occur, we know it is not because the affairs of God's kingdom are abandoned to confusion and disorder; not because Providence has no plan of operation, or that that plan is not formed by wisdom and benevolence; but it is because his ways are above our ways,—because the finite can not comprehend the infinite. The boundless sweep of his purposes can be taken in only by “Him who seeth the end from the

beginning.” We look upon the wonderful machinery of Providence from only one point of observation—the present. The wheel that we see in motion is but one in an indefinite series—one moving another, and that still another, extending onward, it may be, through a thousand generations. Disappointments, therefore, should be expected by us. They must of necessity occur. But there are no disappointments with God.

It was a dark day that broke over the interests of humanity when the “man of sorrows” ascended the cross. There was gloom on earth, and joy only in hell! But it was the day that shook the foundations of the empire of sin, and established the final supremacy of the empire of holiness in the world. The morning of the Pentecost was cheerless to the trembling disciples, but it closed amid the joyous acclamations of three thousand regenerated souls. It was a discouraging hour when Stephen was stoned, and the brethren were persecuted with unrelenting fury; but the result was that they became missionaries whithersoever they went, and the church was greatly multiplied. What then, though, as in former times, occasional clouds may gather on the horizon of our hopes,—this

is no reason for despondency. God reigns; his purposes shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure. What though men eminent for wisdom and piety be withdrawn from the deliberations and councils of the cause at home,—the great Counsellor still survives, and will guard the interests of his cause. What though one standard bearer after another, be stricken down on the field of conflict, and we are called to mourn over the departure of those, whose vigor of body, and maturity of mind, and depth of piety, gave the brightest promise to the church,—the divine missionary still lives. He will raise up others to fill the broken ranks. The mantles of departing Elijahs will rest upon willing Elishas, who, in the spirit and power of their master, will carry on the work to its final and glorious consummation.

I feel, my brethren, that the views I have attempted to bring before you, are such as would be readily sanctioned by our departed brother, were he now present with us. I have gathered the tenor of them, first of all, from the word of God; and I may say, secondly, from his journals and correspondence. They breathe his spirit, and in this respect it may be properly said, that “though dead, he yet speaketh.”

William J. Pohlman was born in Albany, February 17th, 1812. The first twelve years of his life were spent under the paternal roof, where, with all the tender solicitude of pious parents, he was trained up in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord." At this period he left his father's house, and in the business in which he engaged, became exposed to influences unfavorable to the development of those religious principles early instilled into his mind. Yet he was never free from religious impressions; and oftentimes his convictions were deep and pungent, when to his companions he seemed to be entirely thoughtless. Under these circumstances he was called to witness the triumphant death of a beloved sister, by whose tender appeals and urgent exhortations he was greatly affected. His own language uttered several years after, in reference to that event is, "Never shall that scene be obliterated from my memory. Never shall I forget her anxious solicitude to make an impression on my heart. She did make an impression. I was overwhelmed in grief, and solemnly promised her while gasping for breath and just on the verge of heaven, to seek the salvation of my soul. That night saw me on my bended knees before God, pleading for mercy."

Though these serious impressions never wholly left him, yet the circumstances of temptation, by which he was surrounded, served greatly to abate their vividness and force. In August, 1826, when fourteen years of age, he removed with the family of his brother-in-law to Geneva; from which time during the two succeeding years, he experienced various alternations of deep seriousness and comparative indifference. The tender messages received from his aged parents, and the unfailing entreaties of the sister with whom he resided, served to keep alive in his heart, a sense of spiritual things, and at times to awaken strong desires to secure his salvation. It was not, however, till sometime in August, 1828, that he regarded himself as having yielded to the claims of the gospel. That event was preceded by great anguish of spirit, and was witness to strong cryings and tears for pardon through the "blood of the everlasting covenant." But the "set time" to favor the heart-broken suppliant had come. The day of redemption was at hand. The word was spoken "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee!" The prison doors were opened, the captive soul was emancipated and made to rejoice in the liberty "wherewith Christ makes his

people free." He has left on record something of his experience at that eventful period. "Suddenly the most rapturous feelings of joy took possession of my mind. For a few moments, I was in ecstasy. I could now say with an appropriating faith, 'Abba, Father.' Oh! the splendor of that morning, the unutterable joys of that precious moment! But it would require the tongue of an angel, the eloquence of a seraph to describe all my feelings. Praise Him! Praise Him! Praise Him! for the wonders of his redeeming mercy."

In a few months after this, he began to agitate the question of duty in regard to the sacred ministry. After much deliberation and prayer, he at length came to a decision, and entered upon his preparatory course. About this time he settled the question of his future church relationship, and "on the 10th of January, 1830," he says, "I united with the North Dutch Church, and in a covenant never to be broken, gave my all to Christ, and called upon men and angels to witness my solemn vow." After a regular course of study in Rutgers College, where he was distinguished for diligence and success, he was graduated at that institution in 1834. And having pursued a full course in the theological

seminary at New Brunswick, he was licensed to preach the gospel, by the classis of Albany, July 27th, 1837. At an early period in his theological course, his attention was directed to the foreign field as the sphere of his future labors; and in January, 1835, the solemn decision was made, that, "God willing," he would go "far hence among the gentiles." I can not but make, at this point, a few extracts from his letter to the American Board, soliciting to be received as a missionary under its care. "Time has only served to strengthen the decision which was calmly and dispassionately made. After repeated reviews of the same, I am confirmed and settled. I can not now doubt for a moment. Mine was not a rash or hasty conclusion. If there are no contrary indications, I must go, I can not stay. Here then am I, take me. Receive me under your care as a candidate for the missionary service. I wish to enlist for life. If in your view, I can be of any service, I lay my all at your feet. 'Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee.' Send me abroad to publish glad tidings to the idol-serving nations. Send me *whenever, however, and wherever* you please. Send me to the most desert part of all the 'howling wilderness of heathenism, to the

most barbarous climes, or to more civilized regions. Send me to the millions of Pagans, to the followers of the false prophet, to the Jews or the gentiles, to catholics, or protestants. Send me, in fine, wherever God opens an effectual door. Send me, 'for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me,' if I preach not the gospel to the perishing heathen."

The application thus made was granted. In April, 1838, he was ordained in this church to the work of the gospel ministry. On the 20th of the following month he was solemnly set apart to the missionary service; and on the next day took his final departure from the city of his nativity, and the church of his adoption. It was an interesting event. It was a trying moment to many hearts. A numerous circle of friends gathered around him to exchange the last farewell. Aged parents hung upon the neck of a beloved son, "weeping most of all, because they should see his face no more." But the man of God, though moved with deep emotion, wavered not in his purpose. Nor did a lingering regret for the course he had taken, find its way to his heart. He went forth strong in the consciousness of duty, and was followed by

the prayers of multitudes that the God of missions would go with him.

After a period of several years' labor in Borneo, he removed in 1844, to the city of Amoy, in China. In that field of darkness, toiling amid many discouragements and trials, he labored with fidelity till the 5th of January last, when he was called to his reward. With the circumstances connected with that melancholy event, you are all familiar. The Providence that ordered them is benevolent and wise, though to us inscrutable. We would bow to its appointments, and say in the fulness of submissive hearts, "Father, thy will be done." In the full vigor of his powers, and at a period when having overcome the difficulties of acquiring a new and most intricate language, and when the future was so full of promise to the missionary cause, he has been summoned away.

Scarce had we recovered from the grief occasioned by the removal of his beloved companion,* and the breaking up of his family, ere the intelligence falls upon the ear, that he too has left us. He died among strangers. He died surrounded by savage men; but from whose violent

* Mrs. Pohlman was sister to Rev. Dr. Scudder, missionary at Madras.

hands a kind Providence preserved him. There was no loved one present to close his eye, or receive his dying request. The sister upon whom he fondly doated, was unconscious of the mortal struggles of a dying brother.* There were no “devout men to carry him to his burial, and make great lamentation over him.” No monument marks the spot where his dust reposes. He sleeps far distant from the sepulchre of his fathers, and the swelling waves chant the requiem of his departed spirit.†

We have said that this event was fraught with mystery; and yet it addresses to us important lessons of instruction. It teaches us our inability to scan the purposes of God. “His way is in the sea, his paths in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known.” It teaches us how uncertain are all human hopes and expectations. It teaches us the necessity of profound submission to the divine will. It teaches us our own frailty, and admonishes us that what we have to do, we should do quickly.

He whose untimely death we so deeply deplore, possessed elements of character that fitted

* Julia Pohlman, then at Hong Kong for her health.

† Mr. Pohlman was drowned on his passage from Hong Kong to Amoy; the vessel having foundered in a storm.

him for extended usefulness among the heathen. His piety took the form of a deep controlling principle. It governed him in every thing he did. Were I to select what seems to me to have been the prominent feature of his mental constitution, I would say it was *perseverance*. And the union of these two elements—*deep piety*, and *unwearying perseverance*, gave a cast to the entire character, and fitted him in an eminent degree for the toils and trials of the missionary life. Difficulties never discouraged him. Obstacles only nerved him to greater exertion. He was cheerful in duty, prudent in counsel, amiable in disposition, and cordial and firm in his friendships.

But with all his excellencies, he is no longer ours. His work on earth is done, and he is gone to his reward. He has already experienced the fulfilment of the promise which formed the theme of his last sermon on earth,—“For so an entrance shall be administered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” We mourn not for him, as they that have no hope. And we rejoice that we can point sorrowing relatives, and an afflicted church for support to the gospel of the grace of God. Death to the believer,—come

in what external garb it may—is but a messenger of mercy; and the grave is but a couch, upon which, after the toils of life are over, exhausted nature lies down to peaceful slumber. But the grave shall yet be opened, and the dead in Christ shall rise to a glorious immortality. Till the dawn of that bright morning, we say, farewell to thee, departed brother! Thy memory we shall preserve enshrined within the sanctuary of our hearts! And thy bright example of devotion will cheer us onward, as we aspire to become thy companions in a glorious destiny!